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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[on the report of the Third Committee (A/51/616)]

51/78. International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

The General Assembly,

Bearing in mind that one of the purposes of the United Nations, as set forth in the Charter, is the achievement of international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Recalling its previous resolutions on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, as well as those of the Commission on Human Rights,

Recalling also that the goal of the Decade is to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health and that the theme of the Decade is "Indigenous people: partnership in action",

Recognizing the importance of consultation and cooperation with indigenous people in planning and implementing the programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People,[1] the need for adequate financial support from the international community, including support from within the United Nations and the specialized agencies, and the need for adequate coordination and communication channels,

[1] Resolution 50/157, annex.

Recalling Economic and Social Council decision 1992/255 of 20 July 1992, in which the Council requested United Nations bodies and specialized agencies to ensure that all technical assistance financed or provided by them was compatible with international instruments and standards applicable to indigenous people and encouraged efforts to promote coordination in this field and greater participation of indigenous people in the planning and implementation of projects affecting them,

Recalling its resolution 50/156 of 21 December 1995,

1. Affirms its conviction of the value and diversity of the cultures and forms of social organization of indigenous people and that the development of indigenous people within their countries will contribute to the socio-economic, cultural and environmental advancement of all the countries of the world;

2. Notes that the programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People may be reviewed and updated throughout the Decade and that at the mid-point of the Decade the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should review the results of the activities in order to identify obstacles to the achievement of the goals of the Decade and to recommend solutions for overcoming those obstacles;

3. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the programme of activities for the Decade;[2]

4. Welcomes the resolve of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to strengthen efforts to achieve the goals of the programme of activities for the Decade;

5. Reaffirms the adoption of a declaration on the rights of indigenous people as a major objective of the Decade, and notes that there have been two sessions of the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights established pursuant to Commission resolution 1995/32 of 3 March 1995[3] with the sole purpose of elaborating a draft declaration, considering the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples annexed to resolution 1994/45 of 26 August 1994 of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities;[4]

6. Underlines the importance of effective participation by indigenous representatives in the working group, and encourages organizations of indigenous people that are not already registered to participate and wish to do so to apply for authorization in accordance with the procedure set out in the annex to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1995/32;

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[2] A/51/499.

[3] Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1995, Supplement No. 3 and corrigenda (E/1995/23 and Corr.1 and 2), chap. II, sect. A.

[4] See E/CN.4/1995/2-E/CN.4/Sub.2/1994/56, chap. II, sect. A.

7. Welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the existing mechanisms, procedures and programmes within the United Nations concerning indigenous people,[5] and requests the Secretary-General to transmit the review, prior to the fifty-third session of the Commission on Human Rights, to Governments, indigenous people and relevant international organizations for their comments;

8. Recognizes amongst the objectives of the Decade, as listed in the programme of activities, the consideration of the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system;

9. Recalls its recommendation contained in resolution 50/157 of 21 December 1995 that the Commission on Human Rights, drawing on the results of the workshop on the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system, held at Copenhagen from 26 to 28 June 1995,[6] and the Secretary-General's review, consider the convening of a second workshop;

10. Recommends in the light of the review that efforts be made to ensure that relevant United Nations organs, organizations and bodies take part in any further consultations on the issue, and welcomes the offer of the Government of Chile to host a second workshop on the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system;

11. Emphasizes the important role of international cooperation in promoting the goals and activities of the Decade and the rights, well-being and sustainable development of indigenous people;

12. Reaffirms the importance of strengthening the human and institutional capacity of indigenous people to develop their own solutions to their problems and, for these purposes, its recommendation that the United Nations University consider the possibility of sponsoring, in each region, one or more institutions of higher education as centres of excellence and the diffusion of expertise, and invites the Commission on Human Rights to recommend appropriate means of implementation;

13. Emphasizes the importance of action at the national level for the implementation of the goals and activities of the Decade;

14. Encourages Governments to support the Decade by:

(a) Contributing to the United Nations Trust Fund for the Decade;

(b) Preparing relevant programmes, plans and reports in relation to the Decade, in consultation with indigenous people;

(c) Seeking means, in consultation with indigenous people, of giving indigenous people greater responsibility for their own affairs and an effective voice in decisions on matters that affect them;

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[5] A/51/493.

[6] E/CN.4/Sub.2/AC.4/1995/7 and Add.1-3.

(d) Establishing national committees or other mechanisms involving indigenous people to ensure that the objectives and activities of the Decade are planned and implemented on the basis of full partnership with indigenous people;

15. Also encourages Governments and other donors to contribute to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations in order to assist indigenous representatives in participating in the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the open-ended inter-sessional working group of the Commission on Human Rights charged with elaborating a draft declaration on the rights of indigenous people;

16. Appeals to Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to support the Decade by identifying resources for activities designed to implement the goals of the Decade, in cooperation with indigenous people;

17. Invites the United Nations financial and developmental institutions, operational programmes and specialized agencies, in accordance with the existing procedures of their governing bodies:

(a) To give increased priority and resources to improving the conditions of indigenous people, with particular emphasis on the needs of those people in developing countries, including by preparation of specific programmes of action for the implementation of the goals of the Decade, within their areas of competence;

(b) To launch special projects through appropriate channels and in collaboration with indigenous people for strengthening their community-level initiatives and to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise amongst indigenous people and other relevant experts;

(c) To designate focal points for coordination with the Centre for Human Rights of the Secretariat of activities related to the Decade;

18. Recommends that the Secretary-General ensure coordinated follow-up to the recommendations concerning indigenous people of relevant world conferences, namely, the World Conference on Human Rights, held at Vienna from 14 to 25 June 1993, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, held at Rio de Janiero, Brazil, from 3 to 14 June 1992, the International Conference on Population and Development, held at Cairo from 5 to 13 September 1994, the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995, and the World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen from 6 to 12 March 1995;

19. Requests the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, when developing programmes within the framework of the United Nations Human Rights Education Decade, to give due regard to the dissemination of information on the situation, cultures, languages, rights and aspirations of indigenous people;

20. Encourages Governments to consider contributing, as appropriate, to the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in Latin America and the Caribbean, in support of the achievement of the goals of the Decade;

21. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-second session the item entitled "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".

82nd plenary meeting
12 December 1996